



Blue Opportunities: The Marine Economy in the NPA

The Northern Periphery & Arctic Programme Annual Conference 2017

21st September 2017, Marine Institute, Galway, Ireland

This year's Annual Conference had the theme Blue Opportunities, and aimed to focus on the Atlantic sea basin strategy. It took into account the ongoing developments and opportunities in the marine economy in NPA.

The conference addressed topics such as entrepreneurship and innovation related to fisheries, aquaculture, and environmental protection and maritime and coastal tourism.

The event gathered 136 participants, including projects funded by the NPA and other Interreg programmes, representatives from programme bodies, representatives from the European Commission, and stakeholders from organisations linked to Blue Growth, in particular in the fields of entrepreneurship and innovation, protecting and developing the Atlantic marine and coastal environment, and creating a socially inclusive model of regional development for the Atlantic regions.

The day was chaired by the Chair of the Monitoring Committee and Director of Northern and Western Regional Assembly, David Minton.

The Annual Conference was divided into two sessions. The main focus of the morning session was on the EU Atlantic Maritime Strategy, the Irish Marine economy and the role of Marine Institute.

The session started with presentation of the overview of the Marine Institute and EU Programme Engagement, by the director of the Policy, Innovation and Research Support, Dr. Naill McDonough. His presentation was later on followed by his colleague from the support-team for the Atlantic Action Plan from Marine Institute, Joanne Laffey. Her presentation was about the Atlantic Maritime Strategy, and focused on the cooperation opportunities the NPA projects.

The morning session included also speech from the Director of the Directorate "Maritime Policy and Blue Economy" of the European Commission's Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Directorate-General, Dr. Bernhard Friess, who presented promoting sustainable blue Growth in the Atlantic and the Arctic. In his presentation, he added information about the sustainable development of the seas, and the opportunities and challenges that could be found within that.

Another interesting topic was presented by Dr. Stephen Hynes, director of the Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit, who talked about the socio-economic perspectives when it comes to measuring the value of the Atlantic Marine economy.

The managing director of the ocean rainforest from Faroe Islands, Olavur Gregersen, highlighted the topic Blue Opportunities in the North Atlantic with focus on Marine Biomass Cultivation.

By the end of the session we had another speaker from Faroe Islands, the designer and winner of Blue Fashion Challenge 2017, Sissal Kristiansen from the company Shisa. She presented her products made of fish leather and seaweed fabric and opens the eyes for the topic sustainable fashion.

A panel discussion was moderated by Mr. Ole Damsgaard and Mr. Declan McGarrigle about the new funding opportunities under the NPA programme.

During 2017-2018, the NPA will be at the peak of the number of funded projects. For this reason, the event will be a good opportunity to showcase what has been achieved so far. The afternoon session focused on project presentations that included the topics such as Marine Entrepreneurship, Marine and Coastal Environment and Inclusive and Sustainable Growth/tourism.

Each project had only 10 minutes presentation, where they had to focus on introducing their project and why they started, what is the situation today, and what is the aim for the future goals. The whole idea was to give overview of the impacts that the products or services are having on the programme area.

We had the pleasure having following speakers and project on the afternoon session.

- URCHIN (NPA) - Presented by Philip James, Nofima, Norway
- SMARTFISH (NPA) – Presented by Ragnheidur Thorarindottir, University of Iceland
- Bluefish project (Ireland/Wales) – Presented by Benen Dallaghan, BIM - Ireland's Seafood Development Agency, Ireland
- Circular Ocean (NPA) – Presented by Michelle Greene, Macroom-E, Ireland TBC
- APP4SEA (NPA) – Presented by Niko Hänninen, University of Oulu, Finland
- COMPASS (Ireland/N. Ireland/Scotland) – Presented by Adam Mellor, The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), Northern Ireland
- Cool Route (NPA) – Presented by Breda Kenny, Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland
- Atlantic on Bike Project (Atlantic Area) – Anna Conner, Mayo Co. Council, Ireland
- Heimablídni: Home Hospitality - A Faroese Tourism Concept – Jákup Sørensen, Nordic-Atlantic Cooperation (NORA)

We would like to thank all participants and contributors to their active contributions. We kindly ask everybody to complete the evaluation form for the event. All the presentation can be find [online](#).